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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/17/2033
TAGS: [PARM](#) [IZ](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: FORMER IRAQI NUCLEAR SCIENTIST AL-KHAFAJI BEGINS
FELLOWSHIP IN JORDAN

REF: A. STATE 84768
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 2537

Classified By: ISN/CTR Director MATTHIAS MITMAN
Reasons: 1.4 (b) & (d)

[1](#)1. (S//NF) Summary: Iraqi former WMD scientist Salih Majid Hamid al-Khafaji, a U.S.-educated nuclear engineer, arrived in Jordan on October 8, 2008 for a one-year fellowship sponsored by the Department of State's Iraq Scientist Engagement Program (ISEP). In April 2008, al-Khafaji stated his desire to flee from Iraq to Syria after he was purportedly kidnapped and subsequently freed after a ransom was paid. Al-Khafaji was then offered relocation to Jordan following the U.S. interagency agreed temporary relocation process for at-risk Iraqi WMD experts. This cable serves as notification of case status; there is no action requested of post at this time. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (S//NF) Salih Majid Hamid al-Khafaji, a former scientist in Saddam's nuclear weapons program, was relocated to Jordan for a temporary fellowship at the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST). In April 2008, Representative David Hobson brought al-Khafaji's case to the attention of National Security Council staff and the Department of State. After reviewing his case and in light of a Proliferation Risk Assessment provided by CIA's Weapons Intelligence, Nonproliferation, and Arms Control Center (CIA/WINPAC), as well as his stated desire to move from Iraq to Syria, the U.S. interagency concurred in State's decision to offer al-Khafaji a temporary relocation fellowship through ISEP to prevent the proliferation of his skills.

[1](#)3. (S//NF) The Proliferation Risk Assessment prepared by CIA/WINPAC on al-Khafaji states, "We judge based on his past association with Iraq's nuclear weapons program that Dr. al-Khafaji may have had skills that could be attractive to state and non-state actors seeking Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) capabilities, but we have no insights into his current skills or capabilities." According to al-Khafaji's curriculum vitae, his work for Saddam's nuclear weapons program included research into device design and uranium enrichment.

[1](#)4. (S//NF) The Jordan University of Science and Technology is now hosting al-Khafaji at its campus in Irbid for one year as a visiting fellow. The Department's ISN/CTR office has informed Congressman Hobson's office that al-Khafaji, his wife, and two children have been relocated temporarily to Jordan.
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